

Message Text

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45

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-09 IO-10 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 SAJ-01 /084 W

----- 094290

R 101135Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3360

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PROP MR SP MO

SUBJECT: MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT COMMENT ON SAHARA IN HERALD TRIBUNE

REF: MADRID 628

1. MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT 4-PAGE ADVERTISEMENT IN JANUARY 27
INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, WHICH CARRIES LONG COMMENTARY
ON "MOROCCAN SAHARA," SHOULD CAUSE ANGER IN MAURITANIAN
CIRCLES. ADVERTISEMENT NOTES, FOR EXAMPLE: "AT THE
TIME OF THE FRENCH CONQUEST OF ALGERIA, THE MOROCCAN EMPIRE
COVERED AN AREA OF TWO MILLION SQUARE KILOMETERS. AT NO
TIME IN ITS LONG HISTORY DID THE OUED DRAA SERVE AS ITS
SOUTHERN BORDER. MOROCCO HAS ALWAYS HAD A COMMON FRONTIER
WITH BLACK AFRICA WHICH BORDERS ITS PROVINCES AT THE RIVER
SENEGAL."

COMMENT: STATEMENTS SUCH AS THESE WILL ALMOST SURELY
REVIVE GIRM FEARS OF MOROCCAN CLAIMS ON MAURITANIAN
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TERRITORY. END COMMENT

2. WHEN QUERIED FEBRUARY 5 ABOUT HERALD TRIBUNE ADVERTISEMENT, MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR SEMLALI PLEADED GENUINE IGNORANCE ABOUT THE ARTICLE AND STATED HE HAD NOT BEEN APPROACHED ON MATTER BY GIRM. SPANISH CHARGE SIMILARLY HLEADED IGNORANCE FEBRUARY 7, ADDING THAT GIRM HAS NOT RAISED MATTER WITH HIM.

3. COMMET: MAURITAIAN SILENCE ON HERALD TRIBUNE ADVERTISEMENT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED BY FACT THAT ENGLISHLANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS RARELY CIRCULATE IN NOUAKCHOTT. EMBASSY HAS LEARNED, HOWEVER, THAT ENGLISH-SPEAKING MEMBER OF DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY SENT TEXT OF ARTICLE OVER WEEK AGO TO KEY ENGLISH-SPEAKING FUNCTIONARY IN PRESIDENT'S OFFICE. MAURITANIAN SILENCE, THEREFORE, IS MORE LIKELY RESULT OF GIRM POLICY IN RECENT MONTHS TO AVOID COMMENT ON THIS CONTROVESIAL SUBJECT. SHINN

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